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Lenin, Vladimir Il'ich

Lenin's speech at the first
session of the Second...

Moscow

1920

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LENIN'S SPEECH

at the
FIRST SESSION
of the
Second Congress
of the
Third International

AT THE
Uritsky Palace
IN
Petrograd,

JULY 19-th 1920.

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Published by the Executive Committee of the
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**Lenin's Speech at the First Session of the
Second Congress of the Third International at
the Uritsky Palace in Petrograd, July 19th., 1920.**

Comrades,

The theses and questions of the basic problems of the Communist International are published in all languages, and for the Russian comrades they present nothing substantially new, for they chiefly apply some basic features of our revolutionary experience and the lessons of our revolutionary movement to a whole series of Western countries, to Western Europe. Therefore I shall dwell in my report somewhat more fully, though in brief outline, on the first part of my subject, namely, the international situation.

The basis of the entire international situation as we find it at present is in the economic relations of imperialism. Since the beginning of the twentieth century this new stage of capitalism, the most highly developed and last stage, has become quite clear. You, of course, all know that the fact that capital has attained gigantic proportions constitutes the most characteristic and substantial feature of Imperialism. The place of free competition is taken by monopoly of stupendous proportions. A mere handful of capitalists could formerly concentrate in their hands entire branches of industry; these branches have passed into the hands of capitalist corporations, cartels, syndicates, trusts, which sometimes assumed an international character. Thus with regard to finance, to rights of property, and partly to production, entire branches of industry, not only in separate countries but throughout the world, were captured by monopoly. Upon this basis there developed a domination of a handful of the biggest banks, financial kings, financial magnates, a domination such as never was seen be-

fore, and these magnates were transforming even the freest republics into financial monarchies. Before the war this fact was openly recognised for instance by even such non-revolutionary writers as Lizes in France.

This domination of a handful of capitalists had reached its full development when the entire world was divided by the biggest capitalists, not only in the sense of the seizure of the various sources of raw material and means of production, but also in the sense of completion of the preliminary division of colonies. Some forty years ago it was estimated that somewhat more than two hundred and fifty millions of the population of the colonies was subject to six capitalist powers. Before the war of 1914 there were in the colonies already about six hundred million people, and if we add such countries as Persia, Turkey, China which were then already reduced to a semi-colonial status we will get in round figures one thousand millions of people who were oppressed by the richest, the most civilised and freest countries through colonial dependence. And you know that besides direct dependence in point of rights, the colonial dependence presupposes a whole series of dependent relations of a financial and economic character. It implies a whole series of wars which were not considered as wars, because they frequently assumed the character of a slaughter when European and American Imperialist troops, armed with the most perfect means of extermination, massacred harmless and defenceless people of the colonial countries.

The first Imperialist war of 1914—1918 grew inevitably from this division of the whole world, from this domination of capitalist monopoly, from this unlimited power of a mere handful of the biggest banks, say, two to five in each country. This war was waged over the question of the division of the entire world. It was waged over the question as to which one of two groups of the biggest States—the British or the German—should secure the opportunity and the right of robbing, crushing and exploiting the entire world. And you know that the war settled this question in favour of the British group. As a result of this war all capitalist contradictions have become immeasurably more acute. The War at one blow placed nearly a quarter of a billion people in a state which is equal to that of a colony. In such a state it placed Russia, the population of which must be estimated at one hundred and twenty millions, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, in which countries there are no less than one hundred and twenty million people. That is to say,

two hundred and fifty million people in countries which (such as Germany) partly belong to the most advanced, the most enlightened countries, standing in point of technical development to the forefront of modern progress.

The war through the Versailles treaty imposed upon them such conditions that advanced peoples found themselves in the position of colonial dependents, of misery, starvation, and ruin, deprived of all rights because they are bound by the treaty for many generations and are placed in such conditions in which no civilised nation ever lived. Here you have the picture of peace after the war; no less than thousand two hundred and fifty millions of people are suddenly put under a colonial yoke, are subject to exploitation by beastly capitalism which was boasting of its love for peace, and some fifty years ago had some right to so boast, so long as the world was not divided, so long as no monopoly ruled, so long as capitalism could develop comparatively peacefully without colossal military conflicts.

Now after this peaceful epoch we have a most monstrous accentuation of oppression, we see a return to colonial and military oppression, even worse than ever before. The Versailles treaty placed both Germany and a whole series of defeated states in conditions of impossibility of economic existence, into conditions where they are completely degraded and deprived of all right.

How many nations have benefited by it? To answer this question you must remember that the population of the United States of America, which alone fully profited by the war, and which was transformed from a country deep in debt into a country to which everybody owes money—does not exceed one hundred million. The population of Japan, which gained very much, keeping out of the European conflict and capturing the tremendous Asiatic continent, is equal to fifty millions. The population of England, which after the above countries has gained most, is also equal to fifty millions. And if we add neutral states with a very small population, which grew rich during the war, we will get in round numbers two hundred and fifty millions.

You thus get in its main features the picture of the world as it developed after the imperialistic war. One and a quarter billion people of the colonies, of countries which are being cut up alive, such as Persia, China and countries which have been defeated and thrown into a state of colonial dependence. No more than two hundred and fifty million is the

population of the countries which succeeded in retaining their former position, and they all became economically dependent upon America and were in a dependent position in a military way all through the war, for the war took possession of the entire world. It allowed no country to remain really neutral. And we finally have no more than two hundred and fifty millions of population of countries in which, of course, only those at the top, the capitalists, have benefited by the division of the world. All this makes up nearly one and three quarters billion, the entire population of the earth.

I would like to remind you of this picture of the world, of the basic contradictions of capitalism, of imperialism which led to the revolution, the basic contradictions in the labour movement which brought us to the most cruel struggle with the Second International referred to by the Chairman—all this is connected with the division of the population of the world.

Of course it is only as a basic outline that these figures illustrate the economic picture of the world, and, comrades, it is natural that due to such division of the population of the entire world, the exploitation of financial capital, of capitalistic monopolies has increased many times. Not only colonial defeated countries are reduced to the position of dependents, but within each victorious country more acute contradictions have developed—all capitalistic contradictions have become accentuated. Here are a few examples.

Take the national debts. We know that from 1914 to 1920 they have increased in the most important European states no less than seven fold. I shall cite one more economic source which is now becoming particularly important. It is Keynes, the British diplomat, the author of the book: "The Economic Consequences of the Peace" who by the instructions of his government participated in the Versailles Peace Negotiations, who observed them directly from a purely bourgeois view-point, who studied the matter in detail step by step, who, as an economist, participated in the conferences. He arrived at conclusions which are stronger, clearer, more instructive than any conclusion of a Communist, a revolutionist, for the conclusions are made by an avowed bourgeois, by a merciless antagonist of Bolshevism, which, being an English petty bourgeois, he pictures to himself in a distorted, ferocious, beastly form. Keynes arrived at the

conclusion that Europe and the whole world with it is, as a consequence of the Versailles peace, approaching bankruptcy. Keynes resigned, threw his book in the face of his government, and said: "You are committing an insane act." I shall give you his figures which, in general, reduce themselves to the following.

What are the relative national debts of the chief powers? I express it in gold roubles, taking ten roubles as the equivalent of a pound sterling, and here is what we get: the United States have to their credit nineteen thousand million roubles and no indebtedness to other countries. Before the war, it was in debt to England. Comrade Levy at the last congress of the Communist Party of Germany, held April 14, 1920, justly stated in his report that only two countries remained which stand forth in the world as independent powers, Great Britain and America. Only America appears, in regard to finances, as an absolutely independent country. It was a debtor country before the war, now it is the only creditor. All the other powers of the world are in debt. Great Britain has reached the position in which she has seventeen thousand million roubles to her debit and eight thousand million roubles to her credit. She is already fifty per-cent in debt. Besides, her credit account includes six thousand millions owed to her by Russia. The military supplies which during the war were received by Russia, are reckoned on the credit side of Great Britain. Recently, when comrade Krassin in his capacity as representative of the Russian Soviet Government had occasion to speak with Lloyd George about an agreement with regard to repayment of loans, he made it strikingly clear to the savants and politicians, to the leaders of the British Government, that, if they expect to collect the debts too, they are greatly mistaken. And this mistake was already revealed by the British diplomat Keynes.

The question is not only, or not at all, that the Russian Government does not wish to pay the debts. No government could pay them, for these debts are the 'usurers' profits on what has already been paid twenty times. The same bourgeois Keynes, who has no sympathy whatever for the revolutionary movement, says: "It is self understood that these debts cannot be paid."

Concerning France, Keynes gives the following figures: her credit account equals three and half billions, while her debit account equals ten and a half billions. And this is a country of which the Frenchmen themselves say that she is

the world's banker, for her "savings" were enormous. Her colonial and financial plunder, making up a colossal sum gave all the possibility of lending thousands upon thousands of millions, especially to Russia. These loans gave her a gigantic income. But in spite of all that, in spite of her victory, France has got into the position of a debtor.

An American bourgeois source referred to by Comrade Brown, a Communist, in his book, "Who should pay the war debts" (Leipzig 1920) sets forth the relation of the debts to the national property as follows: In the victorious countries, in England and in France, the debts form more than 50% of the national property, in Italy from 60-70%, and in Russia the national debts make up 90% of the national property. But, as you know, those debts do not trouble us, for we have somewhat anticipated Keynes and have followed his very good advice. We have annulled the debts. (Loud applause).

Keynes, however, demonstrates the usual philistine peculiarity: in giving his advice of annulling all debts he says that France, of course, would only gain by it and England would lose a very little, for there is nothing to be taken from Russia any way. America, Keynes goes on, would lose a good deal but Keynes relies on "American generosity". In this respect we will have to differ with Keynes and the other bourgeois pacifists. We are of the opinion that the annulment of debts has nothing to do with the generosity of the capitalists but something else is to be expected, and work must be done in quite another direction.

The figures above referred to are indicative of the fact that the imperialist war has made conditions unbearable even for the victorious countries. This is also manifested by the enormous difference between wages and the rise of prices. The "Supreme Economic Council", which is an institution protecting the bourgeois regime of the world against the growing revolution passed a resolution on March 8th of this year which concludes with an appeal for thrift, orderliness and effort, having in mind, of course, that the working men will remain the slaves of the capitalists.

This Supreme Economic Council being an institution of the Allies, representing the capitalists of the world, gives the following figures: in the United States of America prices have risen on the average one hundred and twenty percent, while wages have gone up only one hundred percent. In England prices have risen one hundred and seventy per-

cent, and wages only one hundred and thirty percent. In France the rise of prices amounts to three hundred per cent and the rise in wages two hundred per cent. In Japan prices have gone up one hundred and thirty percent, and the wage increase has been sixty per cent. I here set the figures given by comrade Brown in his work above referred to against the figures of the "Supreme Economic Council" taken from the "Times" of March 10th 1920.

It is clear that under such conditions the indignation of the workers, the growth of revolutionary tendencies and ideas, and the growth of spontaneous mass strikes are inevitable. For the living conditions of the working people have become unendurable. They have convinced themselves that the capitalists have made excessive profits on the war and shift the expenses and the debts on the shoulders of the working people. Recently we have received a telegraph report that America is about to deport to us into Russia five hundred or more Communists to rid herself of "dangerous agitators".

Should America send us not only five hundred but five hundred thousand Russian, American, Japanese, and French "agitators" matters would not change, for the disproportion between prices and wages will still remain and nothing can be done for them. They cannot help that disproportion because private property with them is being carefully guarded. They consider it as sacred. It must not be forgotten that only Russia has done away with the private property of the exploiters. The capitalists can do nothing to change this discrepancy between prices and wages, and the workers cannot live under the old wage scheme. None of the old methods can alleviate this misery. No single strike, no parliamentary struggle, no voting can do anything with it, for "private property is sacred" and the capitalists have accumulated such amounts of it that the whole world is dominated by a handful of men. At the same time, the living conditions of the workers are becoming harder and harder to bear. There is no way out except by abolishing "private property" of the exploiters.

Comrade Lalinsky in his brochure "England and the World Revolution", from which our "Vestnik of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs" of February 1920 publishes valuable extracts, points out that export prices on coal in England have proved two hundred per cent greater than those anticipated by official industrial experts.

In Lancashire matters have come to such a state that the value of shares has been quoted four hundred percent and

a minimum banking income has been from forty to fifty per cent. It must be pointed out in this connection that banking officials in defining the income of the bank know how to hide the greatest part of it under various disguises, calling it not straight income, but gifts, bonuses, etc. so that indisputable economic facts show that a small handful of men have enriched themselves enormously, that the extreme luxury they live in passes all limits, while the poverty of the working classes continually increases.

One must also point out in particular that circumstance which comrade Levy has so clearly demonstrated in his report referred to above: I have in mind the change in the value of money. Money has everywhere lost its value owing to ineptness, the issue of paper currency, etc. The same bourgeois force, to which I have already referred, namely the declaration of the „Supreme Economic Council“ of March 8th 1920 states, that the lowering of money values, taking the dollar as a unit, equals approximately one third; in France and in Italy two thirds, and in Germany it reaches ninety six percent.

This fact shows that the mechanism of capitalist economy has broken down entirely. Those commercial relationships on which under capitalism the getting of raw material and the sale of finished product depend can be continued no longer: they cannot be continued by way of subjecting a number of countries to any one country owing to the value of money. The very richest country cannot exist, cannot carry on trade because she cannot sell her finished products and cannot get any raw materials.

Thus it is that America the richest country, dominating all others, can neither sell nor buy. The very same Keynes, who had gone through all the intricacies of the Versailles negotiations is compelled to admit that such is the case in spite of all affirmed determinations to defend capitalism, in spite of all his hatred for bolshevism. By the way it appears to me, that no Communist or revolutionary appeal could rival in force of argument those pages of Keynes where he pictures Wilson and Wilsonism in reality. Wilson was the idol of the middle class pacifists of the type of Keynes, and a number of heroes of the Second International and even of the „second and a half“ International, who worshipped the „fourteen points“, and have even written „learned books“ on the „roots of Wilson's policy“, hoping that Wilson is going to save the „social world“, to reconcile the exploiters and the

exploited and bring about social reforms. Keynes clearly showed how Wilson has proved a simpleton and how all his illusions have gone to the winds, as soon as they came in contact with the actual businesslike policy of capital in the person of Clemenceau and Lloyd George. The working masses guided by their own life experience see more and more clearly that the „roots“ of the Wilson policy are nothing but clerical humbug, middle class phraseology and utter incomprehension of the class struggle, while the learned pedants could have learnt the same thing even from the book of Keynes.

All this leads to two inevitable conclusions, two fundamental propositions: on the one hand the privation and the ruination of the masses have increased incredibly. This refers above all to the one and a quarter billions of people i. e. 70% of the population of the earth. These are the countries whose population is dependent, juridically deprived of all rights, and whose „mandates“ have been given to some financial brigands. Besides this, the enslavement of the defeated countries has been established by the Versailles treaty, and by those secret treaties with regard to Russia which stipulate that we owe them so many thousands of millions. The latter treaties, it is true, are sometimes worth no more than the paper they are written on. The above represents the first time in the history of the world, when the plunder, dependence, slavery, poverty and starvation of a billion and a quarter of people has been set up as a legalised thing.

On the other hand the workers of each of the victorious countries have got into an unbearable position. All capitalist contradictions have become unusually acute as a result of the war. And this furnishes the ferment for the profound revolutionary movement which is constantly growing. For during the war people have been put under military discipline, sent to death, or menaced with immediate military punishment. War conditions made it impossible to examine economic reality. Writers, poets, priests and all the press have devoted themselves only to apologising for the war. Now when the war is over the exposure begins. German imperialism was exposed by the Brest-Litovsk peace. Likewise the veil was taken off the Versailles peace, which was to have been a victory for imperialism, but has proved its defeat. The Keynes case shows among other things, how tens and hundreds of thousands of people from the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, from the intellectuals

from among all the somewhat intelligent men, were compelled to follow the course taken by Keynes. He handed in his resignation and threw into the face of his government a book which nails it to a post. Keynes' case shows what is going on and what will go in the consciences of hundreds of thousands of men, when they will have understood that all that talk about „war for freedom“ etc. was nothing but mere deception; that the result of the war was the enrichment of an inconsiderable number of people, while all the rest were impoverished.

The bourgeois Keynes says that the English people in order to save themselves and to save England's economy must insist upon the renewal of free commercial relations between Germany and Russia. But how is this to be brought about? By means of annulling all debts, as Keynes proposes! This is the opinion not alone of the learned economist Keynes. Millions of people are coming and will come to this idea. Millions of people hear the bourgeois economist say that there is no other way out but to annul the debts and therefore „curse the bolsheviks“ (who annulled the debts) and let us resort to the „magnanimity“ of America I am of the opinion, that such an economist-agitator for bolshevism should be handed a thanksgiving address by the Congress of the Communist International.

If on the one hand the economic conditions of the masses have become unbearable, and on the other hand, increasing disintegration has set in among the insignificant minority of the all powerful victorious countries as illustrated by Keynes, then we have before us the ripening of both conditions making for the world revolution.

We now have before us a somewhat more definite picture of the entire world. We know now what it means to have a billion and a quarter of people depending upon a handful of rich men and put under conditions making life impossible for them. When the constitution of the League of Nations was presented to the people and it had been declared that the league had put an end to the war and would henceforth allow no one to violate the peace, and when that document had been put into effect it appeared as if it were the greatest victory we have won. Before the constitution of the League of Nations had been put into effect it was said that Germany must be put under a special regime, but when the document was adopted everything would be all right. But as soon as the constitution of the League of Nations was pub-

lished, even the most violent opponents of bolshevism had to repudiate it. For by that document, an insignificant group consisting of the richest nations, the „Big Four“—Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando and Wilson—was set up to establish new world relations, when the machine was set going it led to complete bankruptcy. This is evident from the wars against Russia. She, a weak, ruined exhausted country, the most backward of all countries against the union of rich and powerful governments dominating over the whole world, has come out victorious. We could not oppose a power anywhere equal to theirs, and still we proved victorious. Why? Because there was not even a shade of unity among them, because one power was acting in opposition to the other. France wanted that Russia should pay her debts and should serve as a menacing force against Germany; England wanted to divide Russia. England attempted to seize the Baku petroleum and to conclude treaties with Russia's neighbours. Among the English official documents there are records figuring out with unusual carefulness all the governments (there were about 14 of them) which promised in December 1919 to capture Moscow and Petrograd.

On these governments England based her policy, to these Governments England loaned millions and millions. But all these calculations went to pieces and all the loans exploded. Such is the condition created by the League of Nations. This League of Nations agreement furnishes the best agitation for bolshevism every day of its existence, for the mighty adherents of capitalist „order“ show how they put stumbling blocks in each other's way upon every question. Japan, England, America and France are engaged in a mad fight over the division of Turkey, Russia, Mesopotamia and China. The bourgeois press in these countries is replete with the maddest attacks, the most bitter harangues against their „colleagues“ for grabbing the prey from under one's nose.

Thus, we witness a complete collapse among the upper layer, among the few richest countries. It is impossible for a billion and a quarter of people making up seventy percent of the population of the earth to live in such a way as is wanted by the domineering „advanced and civilised“ capitalism. One small clique of the richest countries, namely, England, America and Japan, which had the possibility of plundering the Eastern Asiatic countries, but had no independent financial and military power without the support of the remaining

countries, were not in a position to put economic conditions into shape and therefore, carry on their policy in such a way as to frustrate the policy of their partners and colleagues in the League of Nations. This is what makes for the world crisis. And these economic roots of the crisis are the prime causes of the splendid successes achieved by the Communist International.

Comrades, we have now reached the question of revolutionary crisis forming the basis of revolutionary activity. Here we must, first of all, dwell upon two widespread policies. On the one hand the bourgeois economists represent this crisis as mere „unrest“, using the euphemism of the English. On the other hand some revolutionists at times try to prove that this crisis is an absolutely hopeless one.

This is erroneous. There are no conditions which should be absolutely hopeless. The conduct of the bourgeoisie is like that of a desperate robber who has lost his bearings. It is a committing blunder upon blunder aggravating the situation and hastening its own downfall. All this is true. But one cannot „prove“ that there is absolutely no possibility for the bourgeoisie to beguile this or that minority of the exploited by means of some concession; that it cannot suppress this or that movement or crush an uprising of some fraction of the oppressed and exploited. To attempt to „prove“ beforehand the „absolute“ hopelessness is mere pedantry, mere play of ideas and phrases. The real „proof“ in this and similar questions can be derived only from experience. The bourgeois regime all over the world is undergoing the greatest revolutionary crisis. Now the revolutionary parties must prove by actual deeds that they possess sufficient class consciousness, sufficient power of organisation, are sufficiently in touch with the exploited masses, have enough determination and efficiency to take advantage of this crisis for a successful victorious revolution.

To get this „proof“ ready is the main purpose of our assembling here in the present Congress of the Communist International.

Ramsay Macdonald, the leader of the British Independent Labour Party, furnishes an example of the degree to which opportunism still prevails among the parties wishing to join the Third International, and to what extent the work of this party is remote from preparing a revolutionary class and from utilising the revolutionary crisis. In his book „Parliament and Revolution“ devoted to the very same fundamental question which engages our attention at present, Macdonald presents the state of affairs as they would be presented by a bourgeois pacifist. He admits

that the revolutionary crisis is here, that the revolutionary mood is on the increase, that the working masses sympathise with the Soviet power and with the dictatorship of the proletariat (bear in mind that this refers to England); with the dictatorship of the proletariat rather than the present dictatorship of the present bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, Macdonald remains throughout a bourgeois pacifist and middle-class reformer cherishing the illusion of a non-class state. Macdonald recognises the class struggle only as a figure of speech, just as do all the deceivers, sophists and pedants of the bourgeoisie. Macdonald passes in silence the experience of Kerensky and the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionists in Russia, as well as the similar experience of Hungary, Germany, etc. in the matter of creating a „democratic“ non-class government. Macdonald beguiles his party and those workers who have the misfortune to regard him as a socialist and a leader by the following words: We know that this (referring to the revolutionary ferment and the revolutionary crisis) will pass, will quiet down. The war, he says, has naturally given rise to this crisis but once the war is over everything will become all right by and by.

Thus writes a man regarded as a leader of a party wishing to join the Third International. This furnishes an unusually frank and hence a very valuable exposure of what is no less frequently to be observed among the heads of the French Socialists, the German Independents, and the Social Democratic parties, namely: not only an incapability but an unwillingness to utilise the revolutionary crisis in a revolutionary way. In other words, an incapability and unwillingness to carry on actual revolutionary propaganda in order to prepare the party and the working class for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This is the fundamental evil characterising many parties which are now quitting the Second International. And this is just why in the propositions I advance before the present Congress I devote special attention to the question of a most concrete and accurate definition of the problems concerning the preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

One other example. A new book against bolshevism has appeared of late. Books of that kind are being published at present in Europe and America in unusual numbers, and the more such books are published, the stronger and the more rapidly grows the sympathy towards bolshevism among the masses. I have in mind the work of Otto Bauer: „Bolshevism and Social Democracy“. This book gives the German reader a clear conception of what Menshevism is, whose infamous role

if the Russian revolution is sufficiently well understood by the working masses. Otto Bauer gave us a thoroughly Menshevik brochure, although he conceals his sympathy for Menshevism. But it is necessary to get a clearer conception of Menshevism in Europe and America, for this Menshevism is a generic conception comprising all the so-called Socialist, Social Democratic and similar tendencies hostile towards bolshevism. For us, Russians, it would be a dull occupation to write for the European reader about what Menshevism means. Otto Bauer has done that in his book and we are thankful in advance to the bourgeois opportunist publishers who are going to publish that book and translate it into various languages. The book of Bauer will be a useful, though peculiar supplement to the manuals on Communism. To take any paragraph or any argument of Otto Bauer and to find out its Menshevik meaning, to discover the roots of those conceptions that lead to the practice of traitors of Socialism, of the friends of Kerensky, Scheidemann, etc., that would be a problem which could well be made use of for an "examination" to test a student's understanding of Communism. If you cannot solve such a problem, you are not a Communist, and you had better keep away from the Communist party (Cheers).

Otto Bauer excellently expresses the essence of the views of the opportunists all over the world in one single phrase for which—if we had our way in Vienna—we would erect to him a monument during life. "To resort to violence in the class struggle in modern democracies", says Otto Bauer, "would mean to violate the social factors of force".

Perhaps you will find this rather strange and incomprehensible. This furnishes a sample of what can be done with Marxism, for what mean ends in the defence of the exploiters one can use the very theory of revolution. You can get a variety of German philistinism which will furnish you with the "theory" that "the social factors of force" means—number, organisation, place and process of production and distribution, activity and education. When an agricultural labourer in the village or a working man in the city commits revolutionary violence toward the landlord or capitalist, this is not the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is not violence toward the exploiters and the oppressors of the people. Not at all. It is "violating the social factors of force".

Perhaps my illustration has come out rather humorous. But such is the nature of modern opportunism, that its struggle against bolshevism becomes ridiculous.

The most useful, the most necessary thing for America and Europe today is to get all the thinking elements of the working class engaged in the struggle between international menshevism (of Macdonald, Otto Bauer and Co), against bolshevism.

Here we must ask ourselves the question why those opportunist tendencies persist in Europe, why opportunism is stronger in western Europe than in our country. It is because these advanced countries have created and are creating their culture by living at the expense of thousands of millions of oppressed peoples. It is because the capitalists of these countries are getting much above that which they receive from plundering their own workers.

The amount of profits on the export of capital abroad derived by the three richest countries—England, France and Germany—not counting other profits, equalled before the war from 8 to 10 milliards.

Of course, out of such a nice sum it is possible to throw away half a billion on gifts to labour leaders, to the labour aristocracy and for other kinds of bribery. Indeed, the whole affair reduces itself to bribery in thousands of various shapes and forms: The raising of culture in the more thickly inhabited centres, the setting up of educational institutions, the creation of thousands of sinecures for cooperative, trade union, and parliamentary leaders. This is being practised wherever modern civilised capitalist relationships prevail. These billions of surplus value form the economic basis on which opportunism in the labour movement rests. The persistence of opportunism in America, England and France among the leaders and the aristocracy of the working men is very great and its resistance to Communist ideas is very strong. We must therefore be prepared for the fact that the liberation of the American labour parties from this illness will be a much harder process than it has been in our country. We know that enormous strides in the way of curing this disease have been made since the creation of the Third International, but we have not yet reached the end. The process of clearing the working men's parties, the revolutionary parties of the proletariat all over the world from bourgeois influence, from the opportunists within their own ranks, has not been completed by far. I shall not dwell upon the concrete measures to be adopted in this matter. This forms the subject of the principles advanced by me which have been published. My business is only to point out the deep set economic roots of this phenomenon. The disease of

opportunism has been retarded, its cure has been delayed longer than optimists would have expected. Opportunism is our greatest foe. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the labour movement is not proletarian but bourgeois Socialism.

It has been practically demonstrated that the leaders of the labour movement siding with the opportunists are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than are the members of the bourgeoisie themselves. The bourgeoisie could not have maintained itself had it not been for the work of these leaders. A proof of this is furnished not alone by the Kerensky regime in Russia but also by the democratic republic of Germany with its Social Democratic government; this is also provided by the attitude of Albert Thomas towards his bourgeois government. It is manifested by similar experiences in England and in the United States. Here is where our greatest enemy is to be found, over whom we must win the victory. We must leave this Congress with the firm determination that the struggle against opportunism be brought to an issue in all parties. This is the main problem. In comparison with this the task of correcting the errors of the left tendencies within the Communist party becomes a trifling matter. We find in a number of countries anti-parliamentary notions advanced not so much by representatives of middle-class men as by some advanced proletarian radicals out of hatred towards the old parliamentarism, out of a natural process and inevitable hatred towards the conduct of parliamentary leaders of England, France, Italy and other countries.

The Communist International should give the leading instructions, should familiarise the comrades with Russian experiences and with the actual meaning of proletarian political action. This will form our main task and the fight to overcome these errors of the proletarian movement and these defects will be a thousand times easier than the struggle with those bourgeois representatives who have entered the old parties of the Second International in the guise of reformers and are directing their entire work not in a proletarian but in a bourgeois spirit.

Comrades, in conclusion, I shall dwell upon one other phase of the matter. The Chairman has just said that this Congress deserves to be called a world Congress. I think he is right. For we have here among us not a few representatives of the revolutionary movement of the backward colonial countries. This is only a beginning but it is important that this beginning has been made. A union between the revolu-

tionary proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries and the revolutionary masses of those countries where there is a very small or almost no proletariat, this union with the oppressed masses of the colonial countries of the East has been brought about in the present Congress. It is up to us now to make this union a strong one and I have no doubt we are going to do it. When the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers within each country, having overcome the resistance of an insignificant number of the philistines of their labour aristocracy, will combine with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of humanity which have hitherto been beyond the pale of history, which have been regarded as a mere objects of exploitation — then imperialism will have to fall. The imperialistic war has furthered the interests of the revolution. Out of the colonies, out of the backward countries, out of isolation, the bourgeoisie has recruited her soldiers for the imperialistic war. The English bourgeoisie tried to make the Hindu soldiers believe that it is the business of the Hindu peasant to protect Great Britain against Germany; the French bourgeoisie has tried to make the soldiers from the French colonies believe that it was the business of the coloured people to defend France. They have taught them the art of war. This is an extremely useful acquirement, for which we might be very grateful to the bourgeoisie — grateful in the name of all the Russian workers and peasants and particularly in the name of the Russian red army. The imperialistic war has drawn the dependent nations into the arena of history. And one of our chief problems is to consider how to lay the first foundation stone for the organisation of the soviet movement in those non-capitalist countries.

Soviets there are possible. They will be Soviets not of workmen, they will be Soviets of peasants, soviets of toilers. Much work will be required, errors are inevitable and many difficulties will have to be met with on this road. The fundamental task of the Second Congress is to work out or to point out practical principles so that the work which has hitherto been going on among these hundreds of millions of people in an unorganised manner should go on organised, combined, systematic. Now, within one year of following the First Congress of the Communist International, we are emerging victorious over the Second International; Soviet ideas have spread not alone among the workers of the civilised countries, not only to them are they known and understood. The workers of all countries

ridicule the wiseacres among whom there are many who call themselves Socialists and who discuss in a learned or semi-learned way the Soviet "system", as the Germans systematically prefer to express themselves, or the Soviet idea according to the expression of the English "guild" socialists. These discussions of the Soviet "system" or "idea" frequently dim the eyes and the minds of the workers, but the working people sweep away that pedantic refuse and take up the weapons furnished them by the Soviets. The understanding of the role and the significance of the Soviets has spread also in the countries of the East.

The foundation for a soviet movement has been laid all over the East, all over Asia, among the colonial countries. The idea that the exploited must rise against the exploiter and create their own councils is not a complicated one. This idea, after our experience, after two and a half years of the existence of the Soviet Republic in Russia and after the First Congress of the Third International, has become accessible to hundreds of millions of oppressed and exploited masses all over the world. While at present in Russia we are frequently forced to make compromises, to bide our time because we are weaker than the international imperialists are, we know at the same time that we are the defenders of the interests of a billion and a quarter of people. We are still hindered by those barriers, by those prejudices, by the ignorance which is hourly passing away, and as time goes on we are more and more becoming the representatives and the protectors of 70% of the population of the earth, of the mass of those who toil and are being exploited. We have reason for feeling proud of the fact that while at the First Congress we were in reality only propagandists, we only scattered our fundamental ideas among the proletariat of the world, we only sounded the call for conflict, we only asked where those people are who are capable of going our way, now we have with us the advanced ranks of the proletariat everywhere. We have a proletarian army all over the world although at times badly organised and requiring reorganisation.

If our international comrades will aid us now in the organisation of a unified army, then no defects are going to prevent us from doing our work. This is the work of the world proletariat, the work of creating a world wide Soviet Republic. (long, continuous cheering; the orchestra plays the international).

**END OF
TITLE**